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THE GIFT OF THE KING

A SIMPLE EXPLANATION OF THE
DOCTRINES AND CEREMONIES
OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE
OF THE MASS

BY

A RELIGIOUS OF THE SOCIETY OF
THE HOLY CHILD JESUS

At birth our brother He became;
At board Himself our food He gives;
To ransom us He died in shame;
As our reward in bliss He lives.



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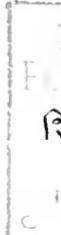
Archbishop of New York.

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JOHN M. FARLEY
ARCHBISHOP
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THE GIFT OF THE KING

CHAPTER I

A WORD ABOUT REVERENCE

BEFORE explaining the prayers and ceremonies of holy Mass it may not be amiss to say a few words about reverence; for whenever any public celebration is to go on, it is surely our duty to understand the part, if any, which we are to take in it.

The holy Mass is a public celebration even if no one but the priest and ourselves are to be seen in the place where it is offered, because the angels are always present. And it is wise to remember

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that, although they are not visible to mortal eyes, they can see us very well.

Now, when we are present at holy Mass, our part is exactly the same as theirs — to pray and be reverent. But what is reverence?

Reverence is the honor and respect which we feel for our superiors — for those who are older, wiser, or better than ourselves — shown in our outward behavior. I need not tell you that God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, is the first and greatest of all our superiors. His name is never to be mentioned lightly, or without necessity — and the sacrifice of the Mass is offered to Him.

The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is truly God, and in His human nature He is Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour at “whose name every knee shall

bow of them that are in heaven, of them that are in the earth, and of them that are under the earth."

So you see the wicked spirits themselves are bound to show reverence to the very name of Our Lord — not from any good will, you may be sure, but because such is the command of God, which they are compelled to obey, for they are still "spirits of His that do His will." This Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, is the victim offered to the eternal Father in the holy sacrifice.

St. John in his wonderful vision of heaven saw the throne of God, and "four and twenty ancients fell down before Him that sitteth on the throne and adored Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power; because Thou hast created all things; and for Thy will they were and have been created."

St. John saw also in heaven: "A Lamb standing as it were slain" and "heard the voice of many angels round about the Throne;" and "The number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction."

There is very much more — all of it wonderfully beautiful — and you will, I hope, read it and love it some day. But surely I have written enough to make you understand how the saints and angels show reverence in heaven.

But this is not all. In his Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul says that Our Lord is "A great high priest who hath passed into heaven, Jesus, the Son of God," and then tells us that when on earth He offered up prayers and supplications, "He was heard for His reverence."

And now you think you have heard—or read—quite enough about behaving with reverence during holy Mass, considering all that has been said to you on the same subject by Mother, "our Sister," and the priest, at home, at school, and in church; — but you must know that all this is written here *not* to make you reverent in church and at your prayers, although if it should have that effect, so much the better.

Then if it is not to make you reverent at holy Mass — what *is* it for?

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It is to impress upon your minds and hearts the fact that you are to be reverent not only while you are present at holy Mass, but also while learning what concerns the holy sacrifice. You must not study the doctrine, prayers, and ceremonies connected with the Most Blessed Sacrament as you would your geography or the multiplication table. Some of you, at least, know that after saying the prayer before study at the very beginning of the school hours in the morning, you go from lesson to lesson only making the sign of the cross before each until doctrine time. Then you go down on your knees and recite the prayer before study again. Did you ever stop to think, or did any one ever remember to tell you why?

It is in order that you may listen to the instruction in the spirit of reverence, and

to implore the blessing of God on her who gives the lesson, and on you who receive it. That is true of *all* religious instruction, but much more true of instructions relating to the Most Blessed Sacrament or the precious body and blood of Our Lord.

Before closing this chapter, children, a few words must be said of the *types* or *figures* which under the Old Law, and indeed from the very beginning, were ordained by God to foreshadow the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and which St. Paul calls “A shadow of the good things to come.” To tell you of all of these would take up too much space, so I can speak only of two or three.

The first was the sacrifice offered by Abel, the innocent son of Adam, as Abel himself was a figure of Jesus Christ the first to offer the great sacrifice of the

New Law. Abel slew upon an altar and offered to God the first lambs of his flock and his sacrifice was acceptable to the Almighty. He himself was slain out of envy by his brother; his blood is said to have “cried to heaven for vengeance against his murderer.”

Our Lord offered to His eternal Father upon the altar of the cross, and afterwards upon the altars of the Church Himself, the “First-born” and Only Begotten Son of God; His sacrifice was acceptable to Almighty God as none other could have been; He was slain out of envy by His brethren, the Jews; and His blood cried to heaven for vengeance against His murderers.

When Pharaoh refused to allow the Hebrews to go out of Egypt even after the country had been visited by nine terrible

plagues, God determined to send an angel to pass over the land and slay all the first-born of men and beasts. But He commanded the Hebrews to kill a lamb in every family and to sprinkle its blood upon the doorposts of their houses so that the destroying angel might see it and pass them by. The lamb itself was to be roasted whole and eaten with great reverence and ceremony before the Hebrews started on that long journey through the desert, which was to last for forty years. And the same ceremonies were to be repeated and a festival was to be observed in all succeeding ages by the chosen people of God in memory of their deliverance from the tyranny of Pharaoh and the bondage of Egypt. "Thou shalt keep this thing as a law for thee and thy children forever."

This “lamb without spot” was a figure of that true Paschal Lamb who has given His body and blood to be our food and whose blood, first shed upon the cross to redeem us from death and hell, afterwards offered for us in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and sprinkled upon our souls in the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, is the sign which the destroying angel knows and passes by. And this “supper of the Lord,” this sacrifice of the true Paschal Lamb, is to be continued to the end of time. For it has taken the place of the old Paschal supper of the Jews. Our divine Lord, who in the holy sacrifice of the Mass is both priest and victim, said to His apostles and disciples, “Do this in commemoration of Me.”

The Hebrews were a discontented people who were never satisfied. Once they

grumbled and murmured against Moses for leading them from a country wherein, they said, they had always plenty of food, whereas in the desert they were often in want. Then God sent them manna which fell to the ground in the early morning like dew. This manna was more strengthening than any other food. Its own natural taste was sweet like honey, but by wishing the person eating might give it any flavor he pleased. It had to be gathered very early in the morning and in certain quantities, sufficient for food for one day. "Neither had he more that gathered more; nor he less that had gathered less."

The Most Blessed Sacrament is the true manna, the bread from heaven which is to be the food and nourishment of our souls during this mortal pilgrimage

through the desert of life. It gives strength to labor, to resist our enemies, and to persevere in the service of God. Moreover no one who partakes of this heavenly food in holy communion receives more or less than his neighbor, since the whole body and blood, soul and divinity of Our Lord are contained in the very smallest particle of the sacred Host and in the smallest drop of the precious blood of Our Lord. All the sacrifices of the Old Law were figures of the sacrifice of the cross and of that sacrifice which is in reality precisely the same as that of the cross although offered in an unbloody manner — the most holy sacrifice of the Mass.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST MASS

THE years of Our Lord's life were over, and the time had come when He was to say farewell to His blessed Mother and His apostles and disciples, and to endure all the terrible sufferings of His Passion and Death. But, "Having loved His own He loved them to the end," and as "His delight is to be with the children of men," His great love found a way whereby He could remain amongst us even after His glorious Ascension into heaven. The Hebrews had been commanded by Almighty God to keep a festival every year in memory of the time when

they had been “brought out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage” by the power of God. This festival had several names. It was known as the Passover, because the destroying angel who slew all the first-born of the Egyptians had “passed over” those houses whose doorposts were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb which Moses had commanded all the Hebrews to slay. It was called the Feast of Unleavened Bread because only unleavened bread was allowed to be eaten while the feast lasted; and “The Parasceve” or Pasch.

This was the greatest of all the Jewish festivals and Jews came from all parts of the world to celebrate the Passover in the Holy City. You remember that the Holy Child had come from Nazareth to Jerusalem with His parents to keep the Pass-

over when He was lost for three days, and we learn from the Gospels that during the public life He went every year to Jerusalem to keep the Passover with His disciples.

Now, at the end of the last year of His life on earth He had come to fulfill the law, and St. Luke says: "And whilst they were at supper Jesus took bread and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said: 'Take ye and eat. This is My body.' And taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave to them, saying: 'Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins. And I say to you I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of My Father.'

And a hymn being said, they went out unto Mt. Olivet."

"Out unto Mt. Olivet," to the Garden of Gethsemane and the three hours' agony, where Peter and James and John could not watch one hour with Him, and where one whom He had loved and trusted was to betray Him with a kiss!

Ah, children, we feel bitterly hurt by our friends sometimes, and shed hot tears over what we believe to be their unkindness or neglect; but who among us has been treated like this? Well might He cry out by the voice of the royal prophet: "If mine enemy had done this to Me, I might indeed have borne with it. But thou a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with me: In the House of God we walked with one consent."

It was at Gethsemane that “the disciples, leaving Him, all fled away”; and the words of the prophet, “I have trodden the winepress alone,” were fulfilled in Him.

You know how they were fulfilled; how He was mocked and scourged and spit upon, and at last crucified upon Mt. Calvary between two thieves. By His death He offered Himself a bloody sacrifice wherein He was both priest and victim to His eternal Father, in expiation of the sins of all mankind; and it is this same sacrifice which will be daily and even hourly repeated in an unbloody manner upon all the altars of the Church even to the end of the world.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS HOLY MASS

BEFORE answering the question, What is holy Mass, we must ask and answer another which you will find in your catechism, although many of you have, perhaps, not learned that part as yet. The question is: What is the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist? And the answer is: The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, together with His soul and divinity under the appearances of bread and wine.

Now we have to inquire what it is exactly that we are obliged to believe

about the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The Church has explained her belief, which is of course ours, under three heads which are called *the dogmas* concerning the Holy Eucharist. A dogma is an article of faith clearly laid down. That there are truly Three Persons in One God is the dogma of the Blessed Trinity; that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became Man, and died for us upon the cross is the dogma of the Incarnation and Death of Our Lord, and so on. The three dogmas of the Holy Eucharist are these:—

I. The dogma of the Real Presence. We are bound to believe that after the priest's Consecration the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ are really, truly, and substantially present in the Blessed Sacrament.

II. The dogma of Transubstantiation. This is a very long word, and a very hard one, if truth must be told. However, it means that the whole *substance* of the bread consecrated by the priest is really changed into the whole *substance* of the body of Christ; and that the whole *substance* of the wine is changed into the whole *substance* of the blood of Christ although we cannot see or understand how this change takes place.

The sacred Host after Consecration looks and tastes and feels like unleavened bread, just as it did before. The precious blood in the chalice looks, tastes, feels, and smells just like the wine that remains in the cruet. But in reality there is no longer any bread nor any wine upon the altar.

By the words of Consecration pronounced

by the priest the bread has been changed into the body, and the wine into the blood of Christ.

Some people find this, as the Jews did, "a hard saying," because they are asked to believe in a change which they do not see. But they have to believe in many changes which are extremely wonderful, and about which they would certainly argue and dispute only that they *can*, and do, see them.

Would it not be hard to believe that the egg you took at breakfast might, had it remained in the nest, have become a little yellow chick able to run about, to pick up crumbs, to cheep, and to look out upon the world with tiny, bright eyes — just as much alive as you are?

III. The third dogma relating to the Holy Eucharist is this: That under the

appearance of bread the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ after Consecration exist whole and entire; and under the appearance of wine, also, the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ exist whole and entire.

Since Christ suffered death and rose again in His glorified body, He is immortal and can never die any more; so that His body, blood, soul, and divinity cannot be separated. Of course this is all difficult; but you are only expected to know and believe — not to understand it. Nobody does that, not even the angels in all probability, although they must know and understand very much more than we do.

The word *eucharist* means thanksgiving, and the Blessed Sacrament is so called because Our Lord, “taking bread

into His holy and venerable hands, *gave thanks* to His eternal Father” at the Last Supper, and because the holy Mass is our chief act of thanksgiving to God.

It is called the Most Blessed Sacrament because it is the highest and holiest of all the sacraments; the Holy Communion because in receiving it we become most closely united to Our Lord; the sacred Host because the word *host* means a victim (among other meanings) and Our Lord is the victim offered to His eternal Father in the sacrifice of the Mass. It is also called the Holy Viaticum. Viaticum is a Latin word which means food for the way; and the Blessed Sacrament is given to the dying to be their food and support during the last awful passage from this world to the next.

Now comes the question: What is the holy

Mass? The catechism answers: The holy Mass is the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, really present on the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, and offered to God for the living and the dead.

Do you know what the word *sacrifice* means? It means the change or destruction of something as an offering to God in acknowledgment of His dominion over us; that is, in acknowledgment of the fact that He is "God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth." A sacrifice is the highest act of adoration that can be made by any creature, and therefore it can be offered only to God.

Perhaps you will say that you sometimes make a sacrifice without actually destroying anything, and that you are asked to ~~make~~ sacrifices which are not offered to

Almighty God, as when mother desires you to sacrifice your wish to play outside on a damp day, or you are told that it would be good to sacrifice a favorite book or toy in order to give pleasure to a sick child, or to one poorer than yourself. Then you are taught to sacrifice your evil inclinations. But in all these and many more cases the word *sacrifice* is used in the sense of giving up something when the giving up costs — as you know it often does.

In all ages of the world people have offered sacrifice as an act of adoration to God. Cain offered the fruits of the earth, Abel a lamb from his flock — and that lamb was a figure or type of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world and who was to be offered in sacrifice to His eternal Father, first in

a bloody manner upon the cross, and ever after in an unbloody manner upon our altars in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Noe's first act on coming out of the ark was to call his family together and offer a sacrifice to God. Melchisedech who was a friend of Abraham offered a sacrifice of bread and wine which was a figure of the Most Blessed Sacrament; Abraham himself sacrificed the ram that was caught in the bushes when, by command of God who wished to try the obedience of His servant, he was about to slay Isaac his son.

Almighty God Himself taught Moses what sacrifices were to be offered in the tabernacle in His honor, and you know that when the Holy Child was presented in the temple, St. Joseph offered two pigeons to be sacrificed. Even pagan people had always the instinct—that is,

the natural feeling which was taught them by nobody — to offer sacrifices. But they offered their sacrifices to false gods, and the evil spirits led them so far astray that they sometimes sacrificed human beings and even their own children. People who allow themselves to be blinded by the devil can be made to do most horrible things, believing all the time that they are pleasing their god.

In order to make a true sacrifice the victim, or offering, must be pleasing to God; it must be perfect of its kind, and free from all stain. It is very difficult to find anything that is truly perfect in this world, but when the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity offered Himself first upon the cross, and afterwards upon our altars in the sacrament of His love, He gave us a victim so perfect, so stainless, so infinitely great and wonderful, as to be

worthy of being offered in sacrifice to Almighty God Himself. This no other victim had ever been, or could be.

There is very much more to be said about the holy sacrifice of the Mass *as a sacrifice*, but perhaps you would find much of it rather difficult. You will learn a great deal when you make your first communion, and still more as you grow older, I hope.

The person who offers a sacrifice is called a priest, and no one can be truly a priest who has not at least *the right* to offer sacrifice, whether he does so or not; and no one can have that right unless it has been given to him by a bishop lawfully appointed.

You hear people speaking sometimes of a Mass of Our Lady, of the apostles, martyrs, virgins, and so on. They do not mean that the holy Mass is offered *to* even the Queen herself. A sacrifice is

the supreme act of adoration, and therefore can be offered only to God. If any one were to attempt to say Mass *to* Our Lady, he would commit idolatry of the worst kind. But Masses wherein the blessed Mother and the saints are especially entreated to pray for us, and in which certain prayers are said in their honor, may be and often are offered to God.

The Mass of the Holy Spirit is, of course, *offered to* the Holy Ghost who is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is therefore Lord and God as they are.

"From the nature of the case the act of sacrifice must be: (1) one which produces a moral destruction of the victim; (2) one which is performed in the name of Christ, who is the chief offerer; (3) one which Christ Himself performed at the time of institution; (4) one which represents His death. Hence it is not the oblation which precedes, nor that which follows, Consecration. It cannot be the elevation of the

species, nor the breaking of the host, nor the admixture of the species, nor their distribution; but it consists principally in the act of Consecration, that act alone satisfying all the required conditions.

(1) The Consecration is performed in the person of Christ, as the form shows: ‘This is *My* body’; ‘This is the chalice of *My* blood.’ (2) Christ Himself instituted It; the words are His very words. (3) It morally destroys the victim, by placing Christ on the altar as it were, dead; (4) by virtue of the words, the body is separated from the blood under the species of bread, and the blood from the body under the species of wine. And (5) Thereby the death of Christ is shown forth; for it is the body broken and the blood shed which are set before us.

Many regard the priest’s communion as necessary to the completion of the sacrifice, because it completes the destruction of the victim, Christ in His sacramental life. Hence, they say, the Church so carefully provides that both species be consumed by the celebrant, or by another priest if the celebrant becomes by any accident incapacitated. The Consecration of both species is essential to the sacrifice, for Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedech, who offered not bread alone, but bread and wine; and the consecration of one species would not sufficiently show forth the death of Christ.”

ABRIDGMENT OF ICKIAN DOCTRINE.

CHAPTER IV

MORE ABOUT THE HOLY SACRIFICE

WHENEVER sacrifice has been offered to God, a priest has been appointed to offer it — that is, after the very early times. Cain and Abel offered sacrifices and I suppose that they were not exactly *appointed* to the priesthood. After them the priestly office seems to have been vested in — that is, to have belonged to — the heads of families. These were called patriarchs and were the rulers of their families as well as the priests. You know that Noe, who was the patriarch, or head, of his family, offered a sacrifice as soon as he and his sons came out of the ark.

When the Lord gave the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai, He gave many commandments besides those which we know as the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments have to be observed by everybody under pain of sin. The other commandments given to Moses were binding only on the Hebrews or Jews, and settled all matters connected with their government as a nation, and with the laws and ceremonies of their religion. Among other things Moses was commanded to consecrate the family of Aaron, his brother, to the priesthood. Sometimes after that persons who did not belong to that family were tempted to act as priests, but God was always very angry when this happened, and punished the guilty ones severely.

When Our Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament and the holy sacrifice of the

Mass, He intended this new sacrifice to be offered, not in one place only, as were the Jewish sacrifices, but everywhere—all over the world. You know He said to His apostles: “Go, teach *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

It would not do after that, you see, to confine the honor of the priesthood to the members of one family, so Our Lord instituted another sacrament called Holy Orders, and to those who worthily receive this sacrament He gives grace to fulfill the duties of the priesthood — chief among these is the obligation of offering the holy sacrifice.

You have not forgotten, I am sure, that when Our Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament, He did not tell St. Peter, or St. John, or any other of His apostles to con-

secrete the bread and wine. He did it Himself, and He Himself offered His most precious body and blood to His eternal Father. But afterwards He said to His apostles: Do this in commemoration of Me. So He Himself was really the priest at the Last Supper, and He Himself was really the victim because what He offered was His own most sacred body and blood. It was He also who offered Himself in sacrifice upon the cross, and it is just the same now.

Our Lord went up to heaven on Ascension Day, and it was not His will to come down and say holy Mass at each of our altars whenever Mass is offered, although He could easily do so if He chose. So one of His properly ordained priests offers the sacrifice for Him; that is, in His place. He acts and speaks for Our Lord, and well-

instructed people understand that he is doing so.

If you read the Mass prayers through in the missal, you will find that the priest does not say at the Consecration: "This is the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ," or "This is the blood of Christ." He says: "This is My body," and "This is My blood which was shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins." That is because he is speaking and acting in the place of our divine Lord — our true high priest.

Another question asked in the catechism is: For what *ends* is the sacrifice of the Mass offered? and perhaps you have wondered what the word *ends*, as used in this place, can mean. Did any one ever ask you to say a "Hail Mary" for his or her intention? If so, you understood that your

friend was desirous of obtaining some favor from Our Lady and wished you to say a “Hail Mary” *to that end*. Or you have received some favor yourself and have been told that you must thank God, and that it will be well to say a “Glory be to the Father” *to that end*. So, you see, the word *end* means here the reason why you say certain prayers; and by the *ends* for which the holy sacrifice is offered we mean the reasons for which it is offered. These ends or reasons — there are four of them — are always the same. You may ask the priest to offer holy Mass for certain ends or reasons of your own which you will call your intentions, and if those intentions are good, he will do as you ask; but the four ends mentioned in the catechism will still be there. The victim that is offered in sacrifice is so great that you can-

not ask for too many good things in return for it.

To have holy Mass offered, or to hear holy Mass in order to obtain something not good, would be a very great sin, and one which only a foolish person would commit, as I am sure you understand without any more explanation. It would be like saying to your mother: "If you please, mother, give me a stick that I may strike you with it." And your mother, if she acted rightly, *would* "give you a stick," but not exactly so that you might strike her with it.

Now what *are* the four ends for which holy Mass is always offered?

The first is: To give supreme—that is, the very highest possible honor and glory to God; to show that we adore Him as our sovereign Lord and Creator, and acknowledge that we owe all things to Him.

Secondly: The Blessed Sacrament is called the Holy Eucharist, and you have been told that the word *eucharist* means thanksgiving. The holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered to God to thank Him for all the benefits He has bestowed, and still continues to bestow upon us every day and indeed every minute of our lives. Do you ever think of these benefits? If somebody gives you a book or a toy, or even some candy, you do not feel quite happy or comfortable until you have thanked that kind person, and very rightly too. But how do you act when Almighty God gives you something? A good deal might be said about this duty of thanking God. I am sorry I must not stay now to say it. But when you hear holy Mass on Sundays, try to remember that one of the ends for which it is celebrated is thanks-

giving, and join your intention with that of the priest.

Thirdly: The holy sacrifice is offered that we may obtain pardon for our sins. It is wise to remember that every one of us who has reached the use of reason has, almost beyond a doubt, committed some sins, either great or small. I am afraid that some children, even Catholic children, commit a great many. St. Aloysius himself, good as he was, had learned to say bad words when he was four years old. Never forget, then, that the third end or intention of holy Mass is to obtain forgiveness for our sins.

Fourthly: The last end or intention for which holy Mass is offered is, the catechism tells us, "the obtaining all graces and blessings through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ." By graces we generally

understand the helps given us by God to enable us to behave properly and act so as to please Him. It is a real truth that we can no more do any good thing of our own selves, at least so as to please God by it, than a baby six months old can stand without help from its nurse or its mother. Perhaps you will say that you have seen bad people do good things — people who never say their prayers or try to serve God in any way. Such persons are sometimes kind to their relations and friends, and good to the poor. Even these could not have done the good without help from God, and, moreover, such acts are what is called *natural*, and do not merit a reward unless the person doing them has some idea of pleasing God, and is in a state of grace — that is, free from mortal sin. We all receive many graces, thanks

be to God, and we all need many. We may obtain them by assisting attentively at Mass.

As by graces we are to understand all the helps given us by God to enable us to work out our salvation, so by blessings we understand all other good things, whether spiritual or temporal. A good home, kind parents, friends, and relations, clothing, food, books, toys, and all the *good* things we possess are blessings from God. We may put them all into our intentions when we hear holy Mass.

You may often hear people saying that they must "get a Mass said for something." They mean that they will ask a priest to offer the holy sacrifice for something they want very much, or for something their friends want. Most often it will be for the release of some dear one

from purgatory. When this is done, it is usual to offer an alms to the priest who will say the Mass. The amount of this alms is fixed, and before asking for the Mass you should learn what that amount is. Then place the sum of money in a clean envelope with the name of the priest written clearly upon it, and lay it on the vestment chest in the sacristy — or in some other place where it will be certain to reach the hand for which it is intended.

Now there is one more word to be said, and then we may close this long chapter. When you go to holy Mass, whether on Sunday or any other day, be sure to join your intention with those of the priest. You may say something like this: "O my God, I wish to offer up this holy Mass in union with those intentions for which the priest is about to offer it, and also

for—" and then mention your own. To be present at the holy sacrifice without making any intention, or praying at all, would be as senseless as if you went into a store, laid five dollars on the counter, and ran out without waiting to ask for the book or the ball which you wanted.

CHAPTER V

THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

NOW I think you must know what the holy sacrifice is, what is offered to Almighty God and by whom, and also for what ends the victim, who is Christ our Lord, is offered to His eternal Father. The next question is: Where is the holy Mass offered?

Under the Old Law, before the coming of Our Lord, there was among the Jews—the chosen people of God—only one place appointed in which sacrifices might be offered, and that place was the temple at Jerusalem. There were in every Jewish city synagogues or houses wherein the

people came together to pray and to hear the law explained, but sacrifices were never offered in these.

There was at Heliopolis, a city of Egypt, a temple to the true God belonging to some Jews who had settled there. It was very beautiful, and had been made as much like the temple at Jerusalem as possible, and sacrifices were offered there. But that temple had not been built by the command of God, nor does any one know that the sacrifices offered there were pleasing to Him. So that there was really but one accepted temple and one altar consecrated to the Most High — the temple and altar at Jerusalem. This was hard on people who had to come sometimes from the ends of the earth at the great festivals to offer sacrifice. But Our Lord came to make things easier, and He instituted the

Blessed Sacrament and celebrated the first Mass in that “large upper room furnished” wherein He had eaten the paschal supper with His disciples.

After the Ascension the apostles dared not build churches because of the Jews, and they also offered the holy sacrifice in their own houses, or in those of the faithful. Then came the persecutions under the Roman emperors, and the Christians of Rome and some other places took refuge in quarries and in underground places called catacombs, to which the pagans very seldom came. Here the martyrs who suffered for the faith during the persecutions were buried, and holy Mass was celebrated on the large, flat slabs of stone that formed the upper part of their tombs, while the Christians gathered round to assist at the holy sacrifice.

After the persecutions had ended, emperors and princes in Rome gave up their palaces to the service of God, and churches were erected in all places wherein the Gospel was preached.

So now a church or chapel—that is, a building especially consecrated for the purpose—is really the proper place wherein to celebrate the sacred mysteries. Still holy Mass may sometimes be offered in private dwellings, in the open air, and even on board ship when circumstances require it and the proper permission has been obtained.

How many kinds of Mass are there?

Only one. The Mass is the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, and never can be more or less than that. But the holy Mass may be celebrated with more or less solemnity according to the occasion.

Thus at half-past ten or at eleven on Sundays and on certain grand feasts you see three priests vested in the sanctuary, the Mass is sung, extra candles are lighted, incense is used, and all the altar boys are in their best cassocks and surplices. You do not "get out of church" until one o'clock perhaps. That is "Solemn High Mass."

On another feast not quite so grand, there will be only one priest but perhaps a good many boys beside the two servers. The priest will intone the "Gloria" and "Credo," say them quietly to himself, and sit while they are sung by the choir. He will chant the Preface and "Pater Noster" instead of merely reading those prayers, extra candles will be lighted at the Preface, and at certain times the thurible will be brought in. That is what you know as "High Mass," which

should be more properly called “Missa Cantata,” or *Sung Mass*.

Perhaps you think that *you* sometimes sing Mass when you sing the English hymns. That is a mistake. Only the priest may sing the Mass. *You* sing during the Mass upon occasions, and it is to be hoped that you do it as well and reverently as you can, for it is a great privilege to be allowed to raise your voices in the church while the holy sacrifice is going on.

Then, last of all, there is the ordinary “Low Mass” which is offered every day, and which is precisely the same as “Solemn High Mass,” and as the “Missa Cantata,” only it is offered with less ceremony.

CHAPTER VI

THE ALTAR

YOU have been told that the holy Mass is a sacrifice. Now whenever a sacrifice is offered, an altar is required whereon it must be offered. We often read in the Old Testament that when certain holy persons were about to offer sacrifice, they built altars either of wood or stone — more often of the latter. When Abraham, by the command of God, was about to slay his son Isaac, he laid the boy on a pile of wood. Elias “built with stones an altar to the name of the Lord,” when he had his famous contest with the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel, and fire was sent from heaven which con-

sumed the sacrifice, the wood whereon it was laid, and the stones of the altar, although all these had been drenched with water by the prophet's command.

There were several altars in the temple of Solomon and one of these was of pure gold, or more probably covered entirely with that precious metal.

The first altar on which the sacrifice of the New Law was offered was the supper table in that "upper room furnished" whereon Our Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament. The next was the wood of the cross whereon He, the divine victim, offered Himself in a bloody manner for the sins of the world. The supper table is believed still to exist in the church of St. John Lateran in Rome; and the wooden altar on which St. Peter celebrated is kept in the same place.

Wherever Mass is celebrated, whether in a grand cathedral, a humble village church, a private room, or on shipboard, the holy sacrifice must be offered *on an altar*, which may be either portable—that is, one that may be easily carried from one place to another—or *fixed*. When the altar is fixed, the slab of stone that forms the top has been solemnly consecrated by a bishop. On this slab five crosses are engraved, one at each corner and one in the middle, and the relics of martyrs are always inclosed in a hollow made in the stone and afterwards closed with cement. If such an altar is removed from one place to another, it must be consecrated again before holy Mass may be celebrated upon it. But many churches do not possess stone altars and, by command of the Church, wooden

ones may no longer be consecrated because wood is easily injured or destroyed. For this reason portable altars are more often used. These are square slabs of stone which should be large enough to hold the chalice and the Host. They are consecrated by the bishop just as the fixed altar must be, are marked with the five crosses, and contain the relics of martyrs. In fact, this stone is the true altar whereon the holy sacrifice is offered. The stone — it is called the altar stone — is fitted into a place cut out for its reception in the middle of the wooden, or of the unconsecrated stone altar.

While explaining the altar, it may be well to tell you, children, that in speaking of the *right* of the altar we mean the Gospel, or Our Lady's side, which is so called because on that side the Gospels are read

at holy Mass, and when there is a shrine of Our Lady in the sanctuary, it is usually placed on that side, which will be opposite to your left. The other side of the altar is the Epistle side, and will be opposite to your right.

I think you all know that the Blessed Sacrament is kept in the tabernacle, which stands back from the middle of the altar, and is always carefully locked out of reverence for the sacred body of Our Lord. I need not describe the outside of the tabernacle. You know that it is almost always more or less like a tiny church, and that there is "a throne" over it whereon is placed a crucifix which is removed only during Benediction. Within, the tabernacle is like a tiny room or cupboard beautifully lined with white silk, and having curtains just inside the

door, often embroidered with gold. The cupboard itself is generally made of steel — it is what is called *a safe* — because men have been found wicked enough to break open the tabernacle, and carry off the sacred vessels which are kept within.

The Blessed Sacrament was not always preserved in such a tabernacle as you see in our churches now. Before the sixteenth century a case, which was sometimes made of some precious metal, was hung by a chain from the ceiling, and in this case the pyx, or little box containing the Blessed Sacrament, was placed. This case was often made in the shape of a dove.

On either side of the tabernacle are two steps called *gradines*, and on these steps are set the vases and candlesticks used to decorate the altar. Perhaps I should tell you that when I use the word *altar*, it

means, not the portable altar or altar stone merely, but the whole of the table which you see in church covered with a white cloth, and before which the priest stands when celebrating Mass.

Here is a tiny story for you. A convert in England told a friend that she was once visiting at a house which stood near the ruins of an old Catholic abbey. The lady stepped out on a balcony which was paved with stone; but she had been there only a few minutes when she was seized with terror although it was broad daylight and she could see nothing of which to be afraid. She was glad to step back into the room behind her. She mentioned this to her hostess and was told that every one who went out on the balcony felt the same thing. Nobody ever remained there long. The lady examined the balcony

(from the window) and noticed nothing peculiar about it except that one of the stones in the floor was marked with five crosses, one at each corner and one in the middle. After she had become a Catholic she saw an altar uncovered and recognized at once that in the mysterious balcony she had been standing on a consecrated altar stone, which had, in all probability, been brought from the ruins of the abbey when the house was built.

And now we come to the lamp of the sanctuary, which every Catholic child loves dearly — often without knowing why. It usually hangs from the ceiling of the sanctuary by three chains, is of beautiful crimson glass, and burns night and day before the tabernacle. It is there to do honor to the King who dwells within, and it keeps its silent watch when

all things else, even in the church, are dark and still. It is a figure or emblem of the love for their Lord that should, and so often does, thank God, burn in the hearts of His children.

CHAPTER VII

ALTAR FURNITURE

WE have not yet learned quite all that we should know about the altar in order to make it ready for Mass. Every Catholic ought to know how to prepare for the celebration of the holy sacrifice, and then Our Lord may have high honors in store for you some day. Who can tell? Then, too, just think what a consolation it would be for your pastor if he could feel quite certain that the older and steadier among his altar boys and sodality girls might be trusted to make ready the altar and lay out the vestments if the sacristan should be

absent or ill! I have known many girls who could do it, and boys are just as clever, I suppose.

The altar must be covered with three cloths made of white linen, and before they are used—that is, when they are new, these cloths must be blessed by a bishop, or by a priest. The two that come next to the altar should be just long enough and wide enough to cover the top, and they may be of coarse linen. The third is laid over these two and must cover the altar and hang down to the ground on either side. It does not come down to the ground in front, but generally hangs over the edge of the altar and is finished either with a pious sentence worked in red, blue, or gold thread, or an altar lace. The girls among you should learn to embroider altar cloths. The stitch is easy and little hands can do

it. It is a great thing to be able to make yourself useful about the church, but always let the pastor tell you what to do, *and then do it.* You will be troublesome rather than a help if you try to teach and direct him, as even good people do sometimes.

There are set on the altar, during holy Mass, three cards. They are all large, but that in the middle which rests against the tabernacle is the largest of the three. On the card which stands upright against the gradine at the right or Gospel side of the altar is printed in large letters that part of the Gospel of St. John which we call the Last Gospel because it is nearly always read at the end of Mass.

The "Gloria," the "Credo," the sacred words of Consecration, and some other prayers are printed on the middle card.

The prayers recited at putting water into the chalice and at washing the fingers are printed on the card which stands at the epistle side.

If you study the arts of printing by hand and illumination, you may some day be able to decorate altar cards, but it is better not to attempt the printing part. Few people can do that with sufficient clearness to be easily read.

You are sometimes told to use your missal at Sunday Mass if you are old enough and clever enough to "find the places," and perhaps you have wondered why, and thought that you like your own little prayer-book with pictures better, and, it may be, that the prayers in the missal are rather *dry*. The last thought is not a fault on your part. The prayers are not really dry any more than are the "Our

“Father” and “Hail Mary,” but they were not written for little children, and you may not understand them at once. But they are the prayers used by the church in the most solemn of all her offices, and there are none more beautiful, and deeply instructive.

The missal we are to speak about now is that large book which you see standing on the left or Epistle side of the altar at the beginning of Mass. It is generally bound in fine leather, has sometimes clasps to keep it well closed when not in actual use, and five ribbons in what are known as church colors, because they are used to mark the different festivals of the church, are fastened to the top of the book.

If you were allowed to hold the altar missal and open it, you would find that some of the printing is in black and some

in red. Moreover, you would see lines of music printed here and there. Both letters and notes are very large in order that the priest may read them easily while he stands upright.

“What is it all for?”

The missal is really the *Mass Book*. It contains the prayers said in all the different Masses of the year, as well as those which never change. The red printing tells exactly what is to be done all through the service. It gives *the rules*; that is, for the proper saying of holy Mass. These rules are printed in the missal, not because the priest does not already know them perfectly well, for he does; but in case he might, for the moment, forget, as it is so very easy to do.

It has long been the custom to print such rules or directions, not for the Mass

only, but for all the liturgical services in red. Hence all such rules have come to be called *Rubrics*, from the Latin word *ruber*, which means red.

The five Church colors—sometimes we say *ecclesiastical*, which long word means belonging to the Church—are green, red, white, violet or purple, and black. The last is used in services for the dead and on Good Friday. Green is used whenever there is no particular feast; red for Masses of the Holy Ghost and of the martyrs; white for Masses of the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady, and holy virgins. Violet or purple is for penitential seasons like Lent. So when the sacristan arranges the altar and vestments for holy Mass, he marks the place of the Mass for the day in its proper color with the bookmarker in the missal. Green for a Sunday or

ferial, that is, not a particular feast; white for Corpus Christi or the Immaculate Conception, red for Whitsunday or the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, and so on.

Next come the candles. Those used at the holy sacrifice must be of pure wax made by the bees, and at Low Mass two must be kept burning all the time, one at each side of the altar, unless the Low Mass is said by a bishop, when four candles are lighted. For High Mass, that is, Solemn High Mass, there must be at least six, and these are usually the tall candles that stand in large candlesticks at the back of the altar.

The pure wax of these candles represents the stainless humanity of Our Lord; and the light given by and united to them is a figure of His divinity. There is nothing used at holy Mass which does not

signify and teach something more than the mere use to which we see it put.

The cruets are little, very little pitchers which contain the wine and water to be used in the holy sacrifice. They stand during Mass on a small table set at the Epistle side of the altar and called the credence table. The cruets may be made of gold or silver, or of glass. The last is really the best because it is transparent and the server need never make a mistake as to which contains wine and which water; and glass is more easily cleaned. When the cruets are made of metal, there is a letter standing up straight on the top of each. A large *V* on one stands for the Latin word *vinum*, wine; and an *A* on the other stands for *aqua*, water. Really, the knowledge of at least a little Latin seems almost necessary when we have to

learn about Church services. Get some kind person to teach you a little as soon as you can.

A boy who ought to have known better once held up two silver cruets and said: "Father Charles told me that these are marked on the lids so that I can tell them apart; but *V* and *A* don't stand for wine and water I'm sure!" You see, for a lad of fourteen that boy did not know much. However, he learned afterwards.

The cruets stand on a glass or silver dish into which the water is poured where-with the priest washes his fingers at the "Lavabo." Beside it a small towel is laid with which he dries them. When the server carries the water for washing the fingers, he must place this towel across his left arm so that the priest may reach it easily.

A little bell — indeed in large churches it is sometimes rather a big one — stands on the altar step at the Epistle side close to where the server kneels. He rings this bell gently at the more solemn parts of the Mass, to call the attention of the people, and also to let any of the congregation who may be at a distance from the altar, know what is going on.

Sometimes the great church bell is rung at the Elevation, and this is done both to honor the King who has descended upon the altar and to give devout Catholics who may be within hearing at the time an opportunity of saluting Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament at the most solemn part of the Mass.

The ringing of bells is a sign of joy, so church bells, whether great or small, are not rung in Holy Week from the singing

of the “Gloria” on Maundy Thursday to the “Gloria” of the Mass on holy Saturday.

Bells have always been rung as signs of rejoicing, and have been used from earliest times as portions of church furniture and adornment. The tunic of Aaron, which corresponded as a vestment to our chasuble, was ornamented with a fringe of pomegranates and little bells of gold.

The canopy carried over the Blessed Sacrament in solemn procession often has tiny silver bells fastened to the poles by which it is supported; and you know the story of the gold fringe adorned with little bells on poor Brother Juniper’s altar cloth? How, on Christmas Day, the sacristan who was nearly worn out, left Brother Juniper to watch the precious

altar cloth while he went to get his dinner, and found on his return that the treasure was gone. Brother Juniper had given it to a poor woman who asked an alms for the love of God. You should read a little book called "The Little Flowers of Saint Francis," one of the most delightful storybooks ever written since the world began.

There must always be a crucifix over the tabernacle whilst holy Mass is being said, and this is of bounden obligation. No priest will knowingly offer the holy sacrifice unless the crucifix is there. And by a crucifix is meant, not a mere cross of wood or metal, but a cross whereon is a figure of Our Lord.

Incense is used at certain parts of the celebration of High Mass, and then a thurible, an incense boat, and a little spoon

are needed. One of the servers or the sacristan always produces these when they are required.

The burning of incense has been regarded from the earliest ages as a mark of supreme worship and adoration. There was an altar of incense in the temple of Solomon. To burn even a grain or two before the statue of Jupiter was enough to save the life of a Christian during the great persecutions; and you will remember that among the gifts offered by the Wise Men to the Holy Child was frankincense — in acknowledgment that He was God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VESTMENTS

WHEN reading about the marker used in the missal, or Mass Book, you learned that there are five Church colors, or *ecclesiastical* colors as they are sometimes called, both names meaning the same thing. These colors are white, red, green, purple, and black, and they are all *emblematic*; that is, each of them has a particular signification when used by the Church. Thus, white signifies joy, purity, innocence, and faith. Therefore the vestments worn on all feasts of Our Lord except those relating to the Passion, of His blessed Mother, of *confessors* — not priests who hear confessions, although they

are called confessors too, but holy men who have glorified God by the sanctity of their lives, and have been canonized, that is, declared to be saints by the church —and on the feasts of holy virgins; that is, of women who have served God in the unmarried state, whether as religious in convents, or merely living in the world. Lastly, white vestments are worn on all feasts of the angels because these blessed spirits have never lost the purity and innocence in which they were created.

Red signifies courage and love. It is the color of warriors and is worn on the feasts of the martyrs. Red is used on feasts of the Holy Ghost because He is the Spirit of Love, and also in memory of “the parted tongues, as it were, of fire” that rested upon the apostles and disciples on the day of Pentecost.

Green signifies hope and confidence. It is worn on days that are not particular feasts from the Epiphany to Septuagesima Sunday, and from the Octave of Pentecost to the First Sunday of Advent.

Violet or purple is the color which denotes penitence, and is worn during the penitential times of Lent and Advent, upon vigils — or eves — of feasts, and upon the festival of the Holy Innocents. Do you wonder why the Church honors those baby martyrs in the color of penitence when they had never committed any sin? It is to show her sympathy with the grief of their poor mothers. “A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children and would not be comforted because they are not.”

Purple is worn at the blessing of the

candles on the feast of the Purification, at that of the ashes on Ash-Wednesday, and at that of the palms on Palm-Sunday; and in all solemn processions except those of Corpus Christi, Maundy Thursday and the Forty Hours.

Black is the color of mourning and is a symbol of death. It is worn at Masses for the dead, and on Good Friday.

Gold may be used instead of red, white, or green, but not instead of violet or black. Black vestments are ornamented with silver or white.

The vestments worn by the priest when saying Mass are the amice, the alb, the cincture or girdle, the maniple, the stole, and the chasuble.

The *amice* is made of white linen; it is about a yard long and two thirds of a yard wide. It is worn on the shoulders

of the priest under the alb, and has long strings, one at each corner of the upper side; these strings are crossed on the breast and tied round the person of the wearer. A cross is marked in the middle of the upper edge which the priest kisses before putting on the amice. The amice was formerly worn so as to cover the head, and was intended to remind us of the handkerchief wherewith Our Lord was blindfolded.

The *alb* is a long, loose garment made of white linen. The word comes from the Latin *albus*, white. This garment is sometimes embroidered with red or blue, and sometimes, more particularly in hot countries, seems to be made almost entirely of lace, which is less heavy than linen; the upper part, however, must always be of linen. The alb signifies the white

garment wherewith Our Lord was clothed in mockery by Herod. It also denotes the purity and sanctity of life whereby the priests of God should be distinguished.

The *girdle* or *cincture* is a cord having a tassel at each end and is long enough to go twice round the waist of the wearer. Its use is to keep the alb in place. The girdle must be made of linen thread, and is usually white, but *may* be of the same color as the chasuble. It signifies the cords which bound our divine Lord during His Passion.

Have you ever noticed a part of the vestments which is like a little stole, made of the same material as the chasuble, and fastened on the arm of the priest?

That is the *maniple*, a word which really means a little handkerchief, and that is what the maniple was at first intended to

be. About twelve centuries after Our Lord it was arranged that the maniple should be used only as a portion of the vestments, and no longer as a handkerchief. Since that time, it has been made of the same material as the stole and chasuble, instead of fine white linen as before. The maniple is marked with three crosses: a larger one at each end, and a smaller one in the middle, where it is pinned to the sleeve.

It is said that the maniple was first used by St. Peter, who wept so much whenever he said Mass at the remembrance of his denial of his Lord that he constantly needed to dry his eyes — so they pinned a handkerchief to his sleeve. Other priests did the same in order to be as much as possible like the prince of the apostles, even in little things. The maniple sig-

nifies the rope by which Our Lord's hands were bound and wherewith He was dragged by the rabble from the Garden of Gethsemane.

The word *stole* means really a long garment, and that is what the stole originally was, but the alb and chasuble and another long vestment must have been cumbersome when worn together, and at last a long strip wider at the ends than in the middle came into use. The stole is made exactly like the maniple, but is much longer. It is worn round the neck, crossed on the breast, and tied down by the girdle. It is made of the same material and color as the chasuble.

Stoles are used in many of the services and offices of the Church, and they are always of the same shape and worn round the neck; but only the stole worn at holy

Mass is crossed upon the breast and tied down by the girdle. The stole worn by the priest when administering the Sacrament of Penance is purple, and is often made small so that it may be carried in the pocket. The preaching, or Benediction stole is fastened across the breast of the wearer by cords to prevent it from slipping about. It is sometimes beautifully embroidered and may be ornamented with gold and precious stones.

The *chasuble* is that large vestment which is worn outside of all, and is marked with a very large cross on the back and with a straight pillar in front. Both cross and pillar reach from top to bottom of the chasuble. The cross is to remind us of that on which Our Lord suffered and died, the pillar of that to which He was bound during the scourging. This

chasuble was at first nothing else than the great outer garment in which men were accustomed to wrap themselves when they went out, and it could be made to cover the head and arms like a wide mantle or cloak. This was very inconvenient and many changes were, by degrees, made in its form until the chasuble became what you see it now. It represents the purple robe in which Our Lord was clothed as a mock king by the soldiers of Pilate.

The chasuble must be made of some precious material, such as silk or cloth of gold, and its color is determined by the Mass to be said while it is worn.

The stole and maniple match the chasuble in material, color, and ornament, and form parts of the same set of vestments. These are all sacred; they have all been blessed before being used, and

may be handled only from necessity and with reverence. Although vestments lose the blessing when they are worn out, they may not, even then, be applied to any purpose except that for which they were first intended.

A square purse or pocket matching the vestments for the day in material and color is placed on the altar during Mass. It is called a *bourse*, meaning purse, and contains a little linen cloth called a corporal. There is also what is called a chalice veil, a square of material of the same kind as that used for making the chasuble, maniple, and stole, large enough to cover the chalice entirely, and marked in front with a large cross. The bourse and chalice veil are not blessed.

CHAPTER IX

THE SACRED VESSELS

BY the word *sacred* is truly meant something that has been so solemnly consecrated and set apart for the service or honor of God that it may never be put to common or profane uses, and any one who should venture to put sacred things to such uses would commit a very great sin. A vessel is a thing whose purpose it is to contain something else — most commonly a liquid. Sacred vessels have always been in use since such things were invented. The chalice or cup that contained the wine offered to Almighty God by Melchisedech was a sacred vessel, and there were many sacred vessels in the

temple of Solomon. They were made of precious metal — most of them were of gold — and when Nabuchodonosor destroyed the temple and carried the Jews captive into Babylon, he took also the sacred vessels. It was their profanation by his grandson, King Baltassar, that at last so excited the anger of God that He allowed the Medes and Persians to take Babylon and slay Baltassar with all his wicked court.

Did you ever learn that poem that begins: —

The king was on his throne;
The satraps thronged the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
On that high festival;
A thousand cups of gold
In Juda deemed divine —
Jehovah's vessels — hold
The godless heathen's wine?

In the midst of the feast a hand was seen writing on the wall the sentence pronounced by God against the king who was committing the sacrilege — and then came the end.

The sacred vessels of the temple were not destroyed or lost in the fighting and pillage that ensued. Later on some of them, at least, were restored to the Jews and carried back to Jerusalem.

Sacred vessels are used also on our altars, and in the service of the Most Blessed Sacrament. They are six in number, and of these three, the chalice, paten, and ciborium, are used at holy Mass; two, the monstrance and lunette, at Benediction; and one, the pyx, for carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick.

Of all these the chalice is the most sacred because in it is consecrated the

wine which is changed into the precious blood of Our Lord. The priest, when speaking the words of Consecration over the Host, holds the particle in his hand. No one but the priest ever touches the chalice except in cases of great necessity, or when, as has happened sometimes, sick persons are allowed to drink from it in the hope of thereby obtaining a cure. At one time it was the custom in some parts of England to take very little children who were suffering badly from whooping cough to the priest, who poured one or two teaspoonfuls of wine into the chalice and allowed the sufferer to drink it. It is said that the child who was so favored was always cured.

Chalices were formerly made of almost any kind of material used in the manufacture of drinking vessels, as gold, silver,

agate, emerald, and even of wood and brass. At present they are either of gold or silver, but they may be, and sometimes are, ornamented with gems. The inside of the cup must be always of gold.

There was once an Irish girl who had considerable property for a peasant, but she never liked to spend anything. She dressed poorly, went barefoot except to church, and lived — so her neighbors said — upon potatoes and buttermilk, which is not bad fare if taken once in a while; but think of *living* upon it, children; for breakfast, dinner, and supper nothing but potatoes and buttermilk!

After many years had passed one person — Nora's pastor — learned the truth. The chalice belonging to the parish church was as poor as the people, and most of them were as poor as could be. Nora

had been scraping, and saving, and toiling to buy a chalice that should be “of pure gold with a few fine stones in it, for isn’t He the King !” She brought two thousand five hundred dollars—all she had in the world, and an immense fortune in her eyes and in those of her neighbors — and the chalice was purchased. But Nora was an old woman then and she died shortly after. I think Our Lord must have loved that chalice.

The word *paten* means a little plate or dish, and that is exactly what the paten is.

Do you remember how Lorenzo, in “The Merchant of Venice,” tells Jessica to notice how

— The floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold —

meaning the stars ?

The large hosts to be consecrated are

laid upon the paten until the Offertory. In former times it was much larger than now, and people often, in their wills, left money for the purchase of handsome patens for the churches.

The *ciborium* is a vessel shaped much like a chalice only that the cup is rounder and usually much larger than that of the chalice. Its use is to contain the small hosts or particles wherewith the priest communicates the people. The word *ciborium* comes from the Latin, *cibus* food, and means that which contains food. It does really contain the Bread of life, the true Food of the soul. The ciborium is made of gold or silver, has a little cover or lid, is often beautifully ornamented with enamel and even precious stones, and is covered with a little silken veil called the ciborium cover. This sacred vessel was

formerly known in England as the pax or pyx, and it was for stealing one from a church in France that Henry V had Nym hanged without mercy. You see Nym had committed the crime of sacrilege. There is no reason for supposing that the pyx was not empty at the time. Indeed, he could scarcely have stolen it otherwise, without breaking open the tabernacle, and we do not hear that he did that.

What we now know as the pyx is a little gold or silver box, very like the case of a hunting watch, in which the priest carries the Blessed Sacrament to the sick or dying. This case is put into a bag and hung by a cord or ribbon round the priest's neck. If you should sometimes meet a priest walking along with his eyes down as if he were not noticing any one and with his hand slipped inside the

breast of his coat, you may know that the King is with him. You must never feel hurt or grieved, then, if even the pastor whom you know best and love most, passes you without giving a nod or a smile in return for your bow. Say a little prayer and pass quietly on without speaking or interrupting in any way.

The *monstrance* is that large vessel in which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed at Benediction, and which you have often seen. There is another little case made of a gold ring fitted with two crystals — like a watch case with glass on both sides, only larger. It is made so that the large Host will fit into it exactly, and it, in turn, fits into the monstrance. This case is called a *lunette*, which means a little moon; and the monstrance is often made to represent the sun with rays proceeding

from the center round the Blessed Sun which “is the true Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.”¹

Now you have learned about not only the sacred vessels necessary for the proper celebration of Mass, but also about those wherein the Blessed Sacrament is contained at other times. It remains only to speak of certain articles of linen to be provided when holy Mass is said. The first of these is the *corporal*, a square piece of very fine linen about as big as an ordinary handkerchief, and having a little cross marked on its outside edge. The word *corporal* comes from the Latin *corpus*, a body, and it is so called because the sacred body of

¹ Only a priest may touch the sacred vessels without an express permission, or without real necessity. Even then any lay person touching them “should always wear a glove, or have his—or her—hand covered with a cloth or clean napkin.”—O’Brien on the Mass.

Our Lord is laid on this precious little cloth during the Mass. No lay person may touch the corporal after it has been used, not even to wash it until it has been washed by the priest. It must be made of fine linen in memory of the linen cloths wherein Our Lord's body was wrapped at burial — and the linen must be white.

The *mundatory* or *purificator* (both words mean the same, that which cleanses or purifies) is a piece of fine white linen, about twenty inches long and twelve wide, and marked with a little cross in the center. Its use is to wipe the chalice after the ablutions at Mass.

The *pall* is about five inches square and is made of the finest white linen stretched over a thin cardboard to keep it stiff. It has a cross worked in the center and may also be embroidered and edged with fine,

narrow lace. Its use is to cover the top of the chalice to prevent flies or dust from getting into the cup, and when not in use, is kept in the bourse.

CHAPTER X

THE LITURGY OF THE MASS

THE Liturgy! It seems as though we had come into the land of hard words. Yes; Liturgy is rather a hard word, but only because you do not understand it. Of course you know that holy Mass is always said in Latin, and perhaps you have wondered why. Or you may have asked some older person and have been told in answer to your question that it is "because Latin is the language of the Church." This you found not very satisfactory, and wished that the Church had chosen English instead, or better still, good American, as her own especial language.

That is all very natural; but you must remember that the King sent His apostles and their successors to “go forth and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Each nation had its own peculiar language then, just as each nation has its own language now; but since the Romans, whose language was Latin, had become masters and rulers of nearly all the civilized world of that time, they carried their language wherever they went and taught it to the people whom they conquered and ruled. So nearly everybody spoke, or at least understood Latin. The apostles must have known something of it even before they received the gift of tongues at Pentecost.

You know, I am sure, that the Church was founded long before the invention of

printing, and any books there were had, until many hundreds of years later, to be written by hand, and they were hard to procure in consequence. The early Christians, even the grown-up men and women, had to learn their prayers and the fundamental truths of the faith by repeating them after a teacher as you learned your “Our Father” and “Hail Mary,” and the “Twenty-four Questions” when you were a baby, so it was far easier and more simple to teach them in a language which all knew and understood. It would have taken the missionaries a long time to translate the prayers and catechism into the languages of all the nations to whom they were sent.

Perhaps you will tell me that Latin is a dead language now; that is, it is no longer spoken by any nation, and that even in Rome Italian has taken its place.

That is true; but partly because Latin has always been the language of the Church, partly because many clever books were written in Latin, and partly for other reasons which we cannot stop to go into now, Latin has always been taught in the schools — that is, the universities — so that it is even now more widely known than any other tongue. These are some of the reasons why Latin should have been chosen and retained by the Church as the language in which her services are carried on.

There was another reason why *one* language should have been chosen instead of all or many, and it was this: The apostles had to teach the Jews who knew much, it is true; but also the heathen nations who knew nothing at all of the true God or of the way in which He was henceforth

to be served. The languages of these peoples contained no words whatever that expressed either the mysteries or the teaching of the faith. When the Samaritan converts were asked whether they had received the Holy Ghost, they answered: "We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost."

The Druids worshiped the earth, and the sun, moon, and stars; the Persians, the sun and fire; the Egyptians, cows, cats, and crocodiles; the Greeks, heroes and heroines about whom their clever men made up wonderful tales which the people persuaded themselves they believed.

Even in Latin there were, at that time, no words that exactly expressed the doctrines taught by Our Lord. It would be impossible to make you, or perhaps anybody, understand all the difficulties the

first founders of the Church had to encounter in teaching the faith. But when they had formed Latin to express what they wanted, they established schools in all the new countries they visited, and taught the language to the children and to the grown-up people too.

This difficulty of finding words to express exactly what is wanted is still encountered sometimes; not by Mother Church who contrived to make her children understand her teaching long ago, but by learned men — scientists — who are always coming upon new things, and cannot so readily make out what to call them. These clever folk generally go back to the Greek and search about until they find a word that seems to suit their purpose, and they twist it and turn it, and give it a prefix or a suffix, make it look as English, or

as French, or as German as they can, and send it out into the world as the name of their new discovery. Electricity, telephone, and gramaphone are such names among many others. Their inventors have sometimes been among the gentlemen who laugh and sneer at the "monkish Latin" of the early ages of the Church. You will learn all about it some day.

What has all this to do with that long word? With Liturgy? Well, there are certain public offices or services for which the Church has prescribed the use of certain prayers and wherein no others may be said. Of these the Mass is the most solemn and the most important. Then there are the forms used in the administration of the sacraments, the offices of Holy Week, and very many others.

All the prayers for such services form

the *Liturgy* of the Church, and they are all in Latin. Of course we have prayers said aloud in our own tongue in church sometimes, as the stations of the cross and the rosary; but none of these are *Liturgical*. The priest is free to say a part or the whole of them as he pleases, and may change one for another, if he likes. There is no fixed liturgical service arranged for Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament; and for that reason you may hear different hymns sung in different churches, although, out of reverence, all are usually sung in Latin.

When you are allowed to sing English hymns during holy Mass, and before and after holy communion, you are not singing any part of the office of the Church. You are singing words that may give you devotion because you understand

them, for the purpose of keeping your minds from wandering.

Now do you understand something of what the word *Liturgy* means?

It means all the prayers and ceremonies arranged by the Church for use in her public offices; and these prayers are in Latin, which, for that reason, is called the language of the Church.

CHAPTER XI

THE PARTS OF THE MASS

BEFORE explaining the parts of the Mass it may be as well to inform you that the whole office was not composed at one time, nor were all the prayers now said by the priest during the celebration of the holy sacrifice in use during the very early ages of the Church. You know that, as far as we can tell, the service at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament at the Last Supper was very simple indeed. The Gospel relates only the words of Consecration as spoken by Our Lord, His giving holy communion to His apostles, His instruction afterwards, which, however, was not part of the Mass, and that having sung

a hymn He left the supper room to go over Mt. Olivet to the Garden of Gethsemane.

It was natural that the Church should, out of reverence, have arranged a proper office for the celebration of the holy sacrifice at a very early period. It was done during what we know as the great persecutions which were set on foot by the emperors of Rome, and lasted for nearly three hundred years after the death of Our Lord.

During these persecutions the Christians were hunted down almost as if they were dangerous animals, and rewards were frequently offered to and received by those who could give information as to Christian places of meeting, and also for the names of true believers, particularly when the persons informed against happened to be rich or important in any way. Now nearly all those who were converted

to the Christian faith were idolaters, and it happened sometimes that persons who did not really intend to give up paganism at all pretended to do so in order to find out who were Christians so that they might betray them to the magistrates and obtain the reward.

Under these circumstances it was not considered prudent to admit *Catechumens*, as those persons who were under instructions were called, to the celebration of the sacred mysteries. Therefore all those who were not yet baptized left the church at the end of the first part of the Mass, which was known as the Mass of the Catechumens. It was arranged expressly with a view to their instruction, and this was necessary since, as you know, they had to learn by *hearing*, for few books were obtainable; nor could many persons read

with the exception of priests, members of the learned professions, as doctors and lawyers, and the sons of rich men who were sent to school as you are.

For this reason, that is, for the benefit of the Catechumens and of the unlearned among the faithful, portions of the Holy Scripture were read in the earlier part of the Mass, as the Introit, Gradual, Epistle, and Gospel. The Catechumens were not allowed to be present at the reading of the Creed. It was the Apostles' Creed which was recited at Mass in those days.

Have you read "Fabiola"? If not, you should do so as soon as possible, or get some older person to read at least part of that most beautiful story aloud to you. Then you will learn more about the Catechumens, and how both Torquatus and Corvinus, two wicked pagans, tried at

different times to betray the Christians to their enemies.

But we must go back to the parts of the Mass. The office for the holy sacrifice is divided into three parts. The first lasts from the sign of the cross made by the priest at the foot of the altar to the Sanctus at the end of the Preface. This part is again divided into two, of which the first, from the sign of the cross to the end of the Gospel, was called the Mass of the Catechumens, as it was all at which they were allowed to be present.

The second, and by far the most sacred and solemn part of the Mass, lasts from the Sanctus to the prayer called the Communion.

The third and shortest part of the Mass is from the Communion to the end of the Last Gospel.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST PART OF THE MASS

NOW I am going to try to explain the parts of the Mass just as you may see and hear them on any week day when you may assist at the holy sacrifice and at the early Masses on Sunday. Solemn High Mass is, as a sacrifice, precisely the same, but as you were told before, it is celebrated with more solemnity and, therefore, with more ceremony than a Low Mass.

There are more priests, more altar boys, more singing both in the sanctuary and in the choir, more candles and incense; but none of these "extras" is essential — that is, necessary — to the offering of the holy sacrifice.

The first part of every Mass, then, is that which begins with the sign of the cross and ends with the Sanctus. The priest, or celebrant, enters the sanctuary vested, carrying the chalice in his hands, wearing that square cap with a tuft at the top which we call a beretta (although this is not really necessary) and preceded by a server or acolyte. The server walks slowly and reverently, with his eyes cast down, and his hands joined before his breast with the fingers pointing upwards and the tips of the thumbs crossed. The priest carries the chalice to the altar and sets it down before the tabernacle, spreads out the corporal whereon he places the chalice, and then goes to the book to find and mark the places of the Epistle and Gospel, and prayers for the day according to the feast, if any, that is being kept.

When all is ready the celebrant returns to the center and goes down to the foot of the altar steps, where he says aloud: "*In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti*" — all the well instructed members of the congregation do the same, only they do not say it aloud, of course—and the first part of the Mass has begun.

Now comes the "Antiphon." Do you know what an Antiphon is?

It is a short — often a very short — prayer to which is usually added a response or answer. An Antiphon is commonly said before a Psalm is chanted or read.

The first Antiphon said by the priest at holy Mass is: —

Ant. I will go unto the altar of God.
and the response is: —

Res. To God who giveth joy to my youth.

Then follows the Psalm *Judica me* — Judge me, O God — which is said on every day of the year except from Passion Sunday to Holy Saturday, and in Masses for the dead. The verses of this Psalm, which are very beautiful, are said aloud by the priest and the server alternately, and it is much to be desired that the latter should take pains to learn at least his own part well, and not gabble gibberish as some careless children do who would not dare to speak to their parents or teachers as they speak to their Lord and Creator. They forget that when the King “prayed much for the people,” “He was heard for His reverence.”

At the end of the Psalm “*Judica me*,” the priest says the *Gloria Patri*, the Antiphon is repeated with another versicle (little verse) and response, and then comes the “*Confiteor*.”

And what is the “*Confiteor?*”

The word “*Confiteor*” means “I confess,” and the prayer beginning with that word, and which of course you know, is said by the priest as an act of humility before offering the holy sacrifice. He is not speaking in the person of Our divine Lord, but in his own person, and he acknowledges his unworthiness even to the people present in the words, “and to you, brethren.”

After the priest’s “*Confiteor*” the server says — in Latin always, but it is to be hoped that he knows and means what he is saying — “May Almighty God have mercy on thee, forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to life everlasting.” Then the server says the “*Confiteor*” and the priest gives the “*Absolution.*”

Next come some versicles and responses,

followed by two short prayers said by the priest for forgiveness of his own sins and those of the people present, and then the *Introit*. The word “*Introit*” is Latin and means *an entrance*, or *going in*. All the prayers that have been said before the “*Introit*” are in preparation for what is coming; and now the holy Mass is really beginning.

During this first part of the Mass many of the prayers, as well as the Epistle and Gospel, are changed from day to day according to the feast that is being kept, or the season, *or the spirit in which holy Mass* is being said — whether sorrowful as for the dead, penitential as in Lent, or joyful as at Christmas and Easter times.

The spirit of the Church is mournful or sorrowful in Masses for the dead, because although being Christians, we do not

“sorrow as them that have no hope,” we must always mourn the loss of those whom we love.

The *Introits* for all the feasts and other days are short, and the greater number are taken from the Psalms. You may find them in their right places in the missal, and it is well to read the *Introit* of each Sunday and great feast carefully, for it will give you the *Spirit* of the day.

After the *Introit* the priest and the server say *Kyrie eleison* and *Christe eleison* alternately three times, like this:—

P. Kyrie eleison.	S. Kyrie eleison.	P. Kyrie eleison.
S. Christe eleison.	P. Christe eleison.	S. Christe eleison.
P. Kyrie eleison.	S. Kyrie eleison.	P. Kyrie eleison.

It is a prayer to ask the Three Persons of the Ever Blessed Trinity to have mercy on all present. *Kyrie eleison* and *Christe eleison* are Greek words and mean “Lord

have mercy on us; Christ have mercy on us."

Do you wonder why this prayer should be said in Greek when all the rest of the Mass is in Latin?

You know that most of the early converts spoke one or other of these languages — Latin, Greek or Aramaic, a language resembling Hebrew. Some persons understood and spoke all three of them, St. Paul amongst others. The Latin was the almost universal language, because it was that of the Romans; Greek was the language of literature, and therefore of learned people; Aramaic was probably the language of Our Lord. For these reasons, while the greater part of the Mass is in Latin, a few words of Greek and Hebrew also find place. Thus, "*Kyrie eleison*" is Greek; the words

“*Hosanna*,” “*Sabaoth*,” and “*Alleluia*” are Hebrew.

After the “*Kyrie*” the priest reads the “*Gloria in excelsis Deo.*” This is a hymn of most glorious praise and thanksgiving, so it is said only when the spirit of the Church is joyful—and outside of penitential seasons on all Sundays. You will never hear the “*Gloria*” in Masses for the dead, in Lent or Advent, nor on some other penitential days, except on Sundays or great feasts.

After reading the “*Gloria*,” or if the season be one of penitence the Kyrie only, standing in the middle of the altar, the celebrant turns towards the people and says with his arms outstretched, “*Dominus vobiscum*”—“The Lord be with you”: and the server answers: “*Et cum spiritu tuo*”—“And with thy spirit.” This

is a prayer that Our Lord may remain in the hearts of the faithful, and a reminder to them not to let willful distractions drive Him away.

The “*Dominus vobiscum*” is, for that reason, repeated several times during Mass, and always before turning towards the people to say it, the priest kisses the altar out of reverence to Our Lord, whom it symbolizes, and to the saints, whose relics are there.

The priest now goes to the Epistle side of the altar and reads from the missal the Collect for the day.

What does *Collect* mean?

I am afraid that I cannot tell you for certain what it means in this place. Some learned persons have thought that these prayers are so called because in each of them the needs or intentions of the faithful

are *collected* or brought together and laid before the Eternal Father. Nearly all the *Collects*—and there are a great many of them for use on various occasions—begin with an invocation to God the Father, and end usually with the words “Through Our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, who with Thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end.”

I am sure that many of you already know at least two Collects by heart; the “O God who by the light of the Holy Ghost,” said before studies; and the prayer for the dead: “O God the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful,” which is usually recited at the end of the *De Profundis*.

On festivals of a more solemn rank only one Collect is said in the Mass, but on those of a lower rank there are usually three. In times of great drought or other

calamity, the priests are often desired by the bishop to say the Collect for that particular necessity. Thus, in time of war, or when there is danger of war, the Collect for peace is said; in time of drought the Collect for rain, and so on.

These prayers for particular necessities are powerful with God when said as a part of the holy Mass. It happened once in the south of England that rain was badly needed, and it is a fact that the Protestant people said: "There is no use in wishing or hoping for rain until the Catholics begin to pray for it in their Mass." And so it was found to be. The drought had lasted some time before the bishop's order came, but once the Collects were said, rain fell.

As a general rule the first Collect belongs to the day, and you will find it in its right place in the missal.

At the end of the Collects the server answers “Amen,” which is a Hebrew word, and means “So be it,” or “Be it so.” You little thought when you said the Amen at the end of your prayers that you were speaking Hebrew, I suppose.

The Epistle. You know that after the day of Pentecost the apostles and disciples of Our Lord became great travelers. He had said, “Go forth and teach all nations,” and of course they went from one city or one country to another, leaving behind them the converts they had made in each. Very often these good people knew little of the faith, and there were no catechisms or books of explanation in those early days. There were not a great many priests either; the new converts were apt to forget what they had learned, and needed to be stirred up and reminded

now and then. So the absent pastors wrote long letters to their flocks, explaining what they wished the people to know or remember. These letters called epistles — from a Latin word *epistolæ*, meaning “letters” — were read to the Christians when they assembled for prayer, so that they might know what *to believe* and *what to do* in order to please God. St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, and St. James each wrote letters of this kind, but they were nearly all very long; much too long to read in the Mass every day. As they all contained excellent instructions for the Catechumens who were allowed to be present at this part of the Mass, and indeed for everybody, a portion of some one of the Epistles was chosen for each day. It is read by the celebrant standing at the left or Epistle side of the altar, and changes

for the season, or the feast of the day. You may find each Epistle in its place in the missal. Sometimes on particular days a portion of some book of the Old Testament is read instead of the Epistle, and is called *the Lesson*.

At the end of the Epistle, or the Lesson, the server says “*Deo Gratias*”—“Thanks be to God”—in thanksgiving for all that is taught to the faithful by the writings of Holy Scripture.

The Gradual, from *Gradus*, “a step,” is so called because it was formerly read from some steps near the pulpit, which are no longer in use. The Gradual consists of a few verses generally taken from the Psalms, and the Alleluia. Like the Introit, the Gradual gives the spirit of the feast or season and is changed for different days.

Sometimes on great feasts and during

their octaves a hymn called *the Sequence* is read here. The word *sequence* means something that follows, or comes after something else; and the Sequence of the Mass follows the Gradual with its Alleluia.

The Sequence read on the day of Pentecost and during its octave is the “*Veni Sancte Spiritus*,” “Come, Holy Ghost, send down those beams.” I hope you know it by heart. Remember there is no Sequence except on great feasts and in Masses for the dead when the “*Dies iræ*” is read.

Before reading the Gospel for the day, the priest says two little prayers, asking that his lips may be purified and made worthy to pronounce the holy words. The Gospel must be read with great reverence always, not only by the priest and in the Mass, but by every one and at all times.

Certain people whom I have known have to *learn* the Sunday Gospel by heart. How many remember that it should be studied with respect? “Gospel time! do let us make haste and get through with it. I have such a lovely story-book to-day!”

Ah, children, the Queen thinks no story one half so “lovely” as that of the life of her Son. When you have to study the Gospel, try to remember that the priest of God, standing at the altar, prays that he may be made worthy to read it.

The Gospel of the day is always a short portion of the life or teaching of Our Lord taken from one of the stories written by the four Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. The priest reads it standing at the Gospel side of the altar, and the people stand while it is

read, both out of respect and to show that they are ready to defend their belief in its truths if necessary. When the priest says: "*Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum,*" etc., which means "The continuation of the holy Gospel, according to—" whichever Evangelist it may be taken from—all present make a little cross with the thumb on forehead, lips, and breast, to show that we accept the truths of the Gospel with our minds, are ready to proclaim them with our lips, and that we cherish them with our hearts.

Did you ever wonder why the sermon is given after the Gospel, interrupting the Mass, instead of at some other time?

If so you have guessed now, I am sure, that this was an arrangement made in the early ages of the Church for the benefit of the Catechumens. The Sunday ser-

mon was, and still is, usually an explanation of some truth contained in the Gospel. When it was ended, the Catechumens in old times left the church or place of meeting; but since by the goodness of God the persecutions are over, at least for the present, that is no longer necessary. On all Sundays and on certain festivals when there is no sermon, the Gospel is followed immediately by the Nicene Creed. This is a profession of faith like the Apostles' Creed, which you know by heart, but it enters more into detail with regard to certain truths which were called into question by heretics in the third century.

When there is a sermon, the Nicene Creed comes after that.

The people stand while the priest recites the *Credo* for the same reason as at the Gospel; but they sit while it is sung

by the choir, as also does the priest. There are several creeds, none of which differ from the others except that some give more details concerning certain points of belief which were disputed when the Creed was drawn up.

Sometimes you will find the creeds spoken of as *symbols*, because the word *symbol* means a sign, and the creeds are signs or symbols of our faith. The Catechumens were not allowed to hear the Creed lest they — if there were traitors among them — might profane the articles of the faith. It was not committed to writing before the Council of Nice when the Nicene Creed, now read in the Mass, was drawn up.

In very ancient times a custom was established among the faithful of bringing offerings — chiefly of bread and wine, but

also of other things — to the sanctuary for the use of the clergy. These offerings were taken up and placed inside the altar rails at this part of the Mass. Whilst this was going on, a Psalm was read or chanted and was called the *Offertory*, because it was sung while the offerings were made.

This practise of making offerings has been generally given up, except in some places, and on certain occasions; and instead of a whole Psalm only an Antiphon is said as the Offertory. This changes with the day; thus, on the fourth Sunday of Advent the Offertory said is the first part of the Hail Mary, and that for midnight Mass is, “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad before the face of the Lord, because He cometh.”

After the Offertory comes the *Oblation*,

sometimes called the *Offertory proper* when the celebrant offers to the eternal Father the bread and wine which he is about to consecrate. This is no part of the actual sacrifice, but only a preparation for it. The host is offered upon the paten and the priest then goes to the Epistle side of the altar and holds the chalice while the server pours into it the wine and a few — a very few — drops of water. The water is added for two reasons; first, because it was, and is, the universal custom in the East to mingle a little water with wine before drinking, and therefore this is what Our Lord probably did; secondly, in memory of the blood and water that flowed from His sacred side when it was pierced with a lance upon the cross. I should like to write down here the beautiful prayers said at the Oblation, but must not take

space for it now. Read them — there are five altogether — in the missal.

After the Oblation the priest goes again to the Epistle side and extends the tips of his thumbs and first fingers towards the server, who pours a little water over them in token of the purity and sanctity he must have who is privileged to touch and handle the Most Adorable Sacrament.

Does a priest ever lay his hand on your head, or allow you to touch it? Remember there is no reliquary so sacred as is that consecrated hand.

A dear little child who had been afflicted from his birth so that he did not recognize anybody, nor ever seemed to notice anything, was often met in his daily outings in a London park by a priest who was accustomed to lay his right hand in blessing upon the head of the boy. And the bap-

tized innocent, when he felt the touch of the consecrated hand, always held up his own tiny fingers in the gesture of blessing, as you see in pictures and statues of the Holy Child. I suppose his angel whispered to him and guided his hand. He has joined the angels since then.

After washing his hands, the priest returns to the middle of the altar, and says the prayer "*Suscipe*," begging Almighty God to receive the Oblation. Then he turns to the congregation, saying aloud, "*Orate, fratres*," or "Pray, brethren," but finishing in a whisper the request that all present should join with him in asking that the sacrifice he is about to offer may be acceptable in the sight of God.

The server answers in the name of the people: "May the Lord receive the sacrifice from thy hands, to the praise and

glory of His name, to our benefit, and to that of all His holy Church."

Then follow some short prayers called "The Secrets," because they are never said aloud.

They change with the Season or Festival.

At the end of the Secret Prayers the priest says aloud: "*Per omnia sæcula sæculorum,*" "For ever and ever," and the server answers, "Amen." The priest says, "*Dominus vobiscum*" to remind the people to pray reverently, and the server answers, "*Et cum spiritu tuo.*"

After this the priest says, "*Sursum corda,*" "Lift up your hearts." This is really the beginning of the *Preface*, or immediate preparation for the most solemn part of the Mass; although we generally call that prayer which begins, "It is truly meet and just, right and available to

salvation," by that name. This is the last prayer that changes for the day or season until the priest says that which is called the *Communion*.

All the Prefaces for the year begin in the same way, and all end with the "*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,*" etc.: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Full are the heavens and the earth of the majesty of Thy glory. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

This is the Church's cry of welcome to the King who is about to descend upon her altar. The bell is rung at the *Sanctus* to remind the people present that the most solemn part of the Mass is about to begin, and every one kneels with great reverence.

Some badly instructed persons bow their heads so low that those who kneel behind

can scarcely tell what has become of them. That is exceedingly unbecoming, and nothing that is unbecoming is reverent. I am sure that none of you would dream of behaving in so ignorant a manner.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SECOND PART OF THE MASS

AND now we come to the second part of the Mass, the whole of which is often called the Canon, and so you will probably find it marked in your book. But like the first part or Ordinary of the Mass, this second part is divided into two. Of these the first lasts from the "Sanctus" to the "Pater Noster" or "Lord's Prayer," and this is sometimes called the Canon of the Mass. It will be easier for you, I think, to follow the arrangement in your book.

This is not only the most solemn part of the Mass, but it is also the most sacred of

all the offices of the Church, for in it the bread and wine are changed into the most precious body and blood of the King.

The true meaning of the word *Canon* is something fixed, not to be altered. It means also a law or rule. By command of the Church the prayers of this portion of the Mass are never changed, except for a few words in two of the prayers for certain feasts. The Canon begins when the bell rings for the “*Sanctus*,” and ends after the priest’s communion.

This part is said by the priest almost entirely in secret, out of reverence for the great and wonderful mystery which he is celebrating, and only the “*Nobis quoque peccatoribus*,” the “*Pater Noster*,” “*Ag-nus Dei*,” and “*Domine non sum dignus*” are pronounced so as to be heard by the people. Throughout this portion of the

Mass, the server scarcely speaks or even moves at all.

The first prayer read after the “*Sanctus*” is that called the *Te igitur* from the words wherewith it begins. In it the celebrant makes an intention for “The holy Catholic Church,” “The Holy Father,” whoever he may be — at this time he mentions the reigning Pope Pius, for instance — “our bishop, as also all orthodox believers and professors of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.”

It is an announcement by the priest that he offers the holy sacrifice for all the members of the Church. A *memento* is a remembrance, and the next prayer is called *The Memento of the Living*. In it the priest prays for and mentions first any particular persons who are still alive for whom he wishes more especially to

pray; and then he goes on to make an intention for "All here present," so that whenever you are so happy as to assist at holy Mass, the priest prays particularly for you in the most holy and sacred part of the service.

After the Memento for the living comes the Commemoration of the Saints. In this prayer are mentioned Mary, the ever blessed Mother of the King, the twelve apostles, twelve martyrs, all of the very early ages of the Church, and "All Thy saints, by whose merits and prayers grant that we may be always defended by the help of Thy protection. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen."

Some other prayers follow in which Almighty God is besought to accept the sacrifice about to be offered; and the *Introduction to the Consecration* of the bread

is read. It is the story of the first Consecration by Our Lord at the Last Supper. "Who, the day before He suffered, taking bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up to heaven towards Thee, God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, did bless, break, and give to His disciples saying: 'Take and eat ye all of this. For this is My Body.'"

And now the King has really and truly descended from heaven in His sacred humanity, and — smaller as far as our eyes can see than the little Babe who was laid in the manger at Bethlehem — He is there, true God and true Man, under the likeness of bread upon our altar.

The priest goes on to say: "In like manner, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, and

giving Thee thanks, He blessed and gave to His disciples, saying: ‘Take and drink ye all of this. For this is the chalice of My blood of the New and Eternal Testament: the mystery of faith which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. As often as ye do these things ye shall do them in remembrance of Me.’”

After the Consecration of the Host the priest raises the precious body of Our Lord in his hands while he kneels in adoration; and the little bell is rung three times to remind the people to do the same. You know the *Elevation bell* very well. I trust that the little boys among you may have the happiness of ringing it some day.

After the Consecration of the wine, the chalice containing the precious blood is elevated in like manner, and the bell is

rung again. On Sundays and great feasts the church bell is often rung at the Elevation, both to honor the King and to give notice to any of the faithful who may hear it that the most solemn part of the holy Mass is going on.

After the Elevation of the chalice, the celebrant begs of Almighty God to accept the sacrifice offered to Him as He accepted the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech — all saints of the Old Testament — and to permit “These offerings” to be borne by the angels “to Thy altar on high”; and he prays for all who, like himself, are about to receive holy communion.

You remember that at the commencement of the Canon the priest made a Memento for the living. Now, after the Consecration, he makes a Memento for the dead, while Our Lord is actually present

on the altar. He begs Almighty God to: “Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants” (here he mentions by name those who are to be especially prayed for; the letters M and N stand instead of their names in the Prayer-book), “who are gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace.”

After that all the faithful departed are prayed for. Once again he prays for: “Us also, sinners,” asking that we may obtain: “Some part and fellowship with the holy apostles and martyrs.”

The prayers which follow are sometimes called the *Conclusion of the Canon*, which is held by some persons to end at the “Pater Noster.” At the end of these prayers the priest says aloud, “*Per omnia sœcula sœculorum*”: and the server answers, “Amen.”

The word *Oremus* which is so often spoken by the celebrant in the offices of the church means: "Let us pray." It is said, not because priest and people were not praying already, but in order to recall the attention of the faithful and to bring back their thoughts, if they have become distracted. That, as you very well know, will happen sometimes. The Oremus is said before the Pater Noster to remind us of the devotion wherewith that prayer must be said which was taught to His disciples by Our Lord Himself.

After the Oremus the priest says, "Instructed by Thy saving precepts, and following Thy divine command, we presume to say Our Father," etc.

You must, I think, have heard the explanation of the Our Father given in instructions, if you have not learned it in

your catechism; and you know that the prayer in which Our Lord teaches us to ask for very serious and very great things must not be lightly and carelessly said at any time, much less at holy Mass. Did you ever stop to consider what it is you pray for when you say the Our Father?

You ask that God's will *may be done on earth as it is done in heaven* — and in heaven there is no other will but His. You ask that your Father in heaven may forgive your offenses — your sins and faults great and small — *as you forgive others* who may have offended you. Just think what that means!

At the end of the Pater Noster a prayer is said that we may be delivered from all evils, "past, present, and to come"; that Almighty God may "mercifully grant peace in our days"; and that "we may

be always free from sin, and secure from all disturbance through the same Christ Our Lord."

While this prayer is being said, the priest breaks the large Host which has been consecrated, in order to remind us that Our Lord, after blessing the bread "brake and gave to His disciples." Then the consecrated particle is dropped into the chalice with the prayer: "May this mingling and Consecration of the body and blood of Christ be to us that receive it effectual to eternal life. Amen."

That, you see, is a prayer for all who are to receive Our Lord in holy communion at that Mass.

The priest covers the chalice, makes a genuflection, and, rising to his feet, says the "Agnus Dei."

When St. John was baptizing by the

river Jordan, he saw Our Lord coming towards him and said: "Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him that taketh away the sins of the world"; and St. John the Evangelist in his wonderful vision of heaven saw: "The Lamb standing as it were slain." So now in the holy Mass the priest says three times the prayer "Agnus Dei," or "Lamb of God."

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,

Give us Peace.

In Masses for the dead the Church, instead of "Have mercy on us"; and, "Give us peace," says: "Give them rest," and

“Give them eternal rest.” After the “Agnus Dei” a prayer for peace is said, and the prayers in preparation for the priest’s communion.

You must all know the words, “Domine, non sum dignus,” you have heard them so often. Do you know what they mean, or why they are said three times before the Communion in the Mass? In the time of Our Lord there was a Roman soldier, an officer, whose servant was sick. The officer went to Our Lord and told Him his trouble, and the King said that He would go at once to the sick man. Now that Roman soldier, who was not even a Jew, knew by faith to whom he was speaking, and he answered immediately: “Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof. Say but the word and my servant shall be healed.”

As you may suppose, the servant *was* healed, and in memory of the faith and humility of his master those words are repeated three times in every Mass before the priest's communion which, with the exception of the Consecration, is the most solemn part of the holy sacrifice. Only instead of "My servant" the priest says, "My soul shall be healed." After the "Domine non sum dignus" the priest says, "May the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto everlasting life," and receives the sacred Host.

Next he takes the chalice in his right hand, and saying: "What shall I render to the Lord for all that He has rendered unto me? I will take the chalice of salvation and will call upon the name of the Lord. Praising I will call upon His name, and I shall be saved from my

enemies" and "The blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to everlasting life," receives the precious blood.

After his own communion the priest communicates such persons among those present as go up to the rails; but he gives them communion from the ciborium and only under the form of bread, after pronouncing over them the words of absolution. You must remember, however, that this is not the absolution of the Sacrament of Penance.

When Our Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament at the Last Supper, He administered holy communion to all present under both kinds; that is, every one "Ate of the bread" and "Drank of the chalice"; and for many years this continued to be the custom in the Church.

But after a while, as the number of

communicants increased, it was found to be a custom which gave rise to disorder and irreverence. People were careless, and drops of the precious blood were spilled, so at last the Church made a law that only priests should drink from the chalice.

You do not require to be told that those who receive only under the form of bread partake of Our Lord's body and blood, soul and divinity, just as much as the priest does who receives under both kinds.

When the people have received holy communion, the priest holds out the chalice to the server, who pours into it a little wine. The priest washes the inside of the chalice carefully with this in order that no drop of the precious blood may be left in it, and then drinks the wine. This is called the *First Ablution*. If, as is

sometimes the case, the priest has to say a second Mass, he does not consume it, but places it in a small vessel left near the tabernacle for this purpose. Then he holds the chalice in both hands and goes to the Epistle side of the altar, where the server pours a little wine over the tips of the priest's thumbs and first fingers into the chalice, in case any tiny particles of the sacred Host should be left on them. This also the priest drinks, unless he has another Mass to say. The word *Ablution* means *a washing*.

CHAPTER XIV

THE THIRD PART OF THE MASS

THE third and last part of the holy Mass is a very short one. After arranging the chalice, covering it, that is, with the paten and veil, the priest goes to the Epistle side of the altar and reads from the missal the prayer called the Communion. This is a short Antiphon, which changes according to the feast or season, for you know the Canon of the Mass is over now.

After the “Communion” the priest reads the prayers called *Post-Communion*. The word *post* means after. The number of these post-communions cor-

responds with the number of Collects read in the first part of the Mass. After the last prayer the priest says "*Dominus Vobiscum*" for the last time, and adds with his face still turned towards the people, "*Ite; missa est,*" which means "Go; you are dismissed"—that is, unless the Mass is being said for the departed, or the day is a penitential one. In the former case he says, with his face to the altar, *Requiescat in Pace*, and in the latter case, "*Benedicamus Domino,*" — "Let us bless the Lord."

Are we to go out when the priest says, "*Ite; missa est?*"

No, my dear children, most certainly not. You are to remain in your place until the priest has read the Last Gospel, recited the English prayers, and has left the sanctuary, and entered the sacristy.

You are not to move out of your place as long as the priest remains in sight.

But why does he tell us to go, if he means us to stay?

This is the reason. Once upon a time, long, long ago, the Mass ended with the post-communion prayers, and the people were really dismissed when the "*Ite; missa est*" was said. Later on the Blessing and the Last Gospel were added, and the Church expects her children to stay until all is finished. Still she has a great reverence for old customs, and never omits anything which has once formed part of her Liturgy without good reason or necessity.

After the "*Ite; missa est*," the priest says a short prayer to the most Holy Trinity; then turns and gives the people a blessing in the name of the Father, and of

the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and of course everybody kneels to receive it. Well-instructed people kneel down very quietly and with great reverence, bowing the head a little, but not with a jerk as if it were to be dropped onto the bench below.

When he has given the Blessing, the priest turns to the Gospel side of the altar and reads what is commonly called *The Last Gospel*, because another has been read in the first part of the Mass, and because it comes really at the end of the Mass.

Every one stands while the Gospel is read, and at its beginning every one makes the sign of the cross with the tip of the thumb, on forehead, lips, and breast; and every one *genuflects*, that is, kneels down on one knee, when the priest says “*Et Verbum caro factum est*” — “And the

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Word was made flesh" — in honor of the Incarnation of the King.

At the end of the Last Gospel the server says "*Deo Gratias*" — "Thanks be to God" — and the Mass is ended. The English prayers that follow are no part of the Mass, and are said at that time only because the Holy Father wishes it.

CHAPTER XV

SOME FINAL REMARKS

AND now, children, I have tried to give you such an explanation of the holy Mass as may help you to understand your prayer-books better, perhaps, than you have hitherto done — and to follow the priest when you assist at the holy sacrifice.

By the way, did you ever notice that while people speak of *going* to a lecture — *going* to a concert — *going* to a matinée, — we say that they *assist* at holy Mass? The word *assist* means to help or take part in whatever is going on, and the word shows that we are not in church merely as spectators, but that we really

have something to do there in conjunction with the priest. Our part is to make our intention with the celebrant, to join our prayers with his, and to conduct ourselves with reverence and intelligence; kneeling, standing, and sitting at the right times, and showing by our behavior generally that we understand what is going on.

Now there is something else to be explained, and perhaps you may find it rather difficult, and may feel inclined to say "Why?"

These "whys" which we are so often tempted to say may be divided into three classes, I think. There are the "whys" which may be answered in a way that you can understand, young as you are. There are the "whys" whose answers you could not understand until you are much older and wiser than you are now. And there

are “whys” whose answers none of us could give: and these answers — *reasons* grown up people call them — we shall never know while we are on earth.

Perhaps when Mother Church bids us do this or that, it is wiser not to ask “Why?” but to obey simply as old-fashioned children do.

But *why* do you tell us that?

Read what is coming attentively, and you will find the answer to that “why?” for yourselves.

You know very well that Mother at home, and Sister or Teacher at school, are much in the habit of telling you that this must be done, and that other thing must be left undone. You must always speak and act the truth; you must not tell a lie; you must not steal; you must go to Mass in time on Sunday. Every one

of these things is right or wrong in itself, and if you break the commandment given by Mother or Sister, you also break the law of God.

But there are commands of a different kind that you receive very often. Mother tells you not to go to church or school in wet weather without rubbers and an umbrella; she tells you to follow certain rules at table; to go to bed at a certain time, and so on. The commands to tell the truth always, to respect your neighbor's property, and to hear the whole Mass on Sundays, not even Mother herself can change, or give you permission to disobey. They are a portion of the great binding law of God and the Church. But in itself it is no sin to wear thin shoes or leave your umbrella at home in wet weather; no sin to use your fingers instead of a fork; no

sin in itself to sit up till eleven o'clock every night. All these things would be foolish, of course; but if you do them even wilfully, the real wrong-doing will lie in the disobedience, not in committing the act.

Mother may, if she thinks well, tell you to paddle in the creek, to run out in the rain, to use your left hand instead of the right, or to go to bed at nine instead of at eight — or to play ball in all parts of the house, although she is not very likely to do it frequently.

Now it is just the same with our holy Mother the Church. The commands of God she can never allow any one to disregard, or set aside. She can never change a matter of faith — never permit any one of her children on any pretence whatever to do anything that is in itself wrong.

But just as Mother and Sister make laws — commonly called *rules* — to keep order in the house and school, so there have to be laws made to insure that order is kept in the Church.

Do you know what a *disciple* is? The word means one who is taught by — who follows the teaching of — another. You and your companions at school are disciples of the person who teaches you. The word *discipline* comes from the same Latin word as disciple, and signifies all the means taken to train disciples. You know what the discipline of the school is.

Now all those laws and rules made by the Church for the better government of her children, and the ordering of her offices and ceremonies, so long as they do not deal directly with faith or morals, form part of her discipline, and may be

changed, or put entirely aside, by the Church whenever she judges it better to do so.

It is part of the Church's discipline that the Mass should be said in Latin; and no one may, without express permission, say it in any other language. But the Church may give that permission if she considers the doing so advisable.

Again, certain saints are mentioned by name in the Confiteor, Blessed Mary ever Virgin, Blessed Michael the Archangel, Blessed John the Baptist, and the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. No priest may, of his own accord, put in the name of any other saint when saying the Confiteor at Mass. But if you should assist at a Mass said by a Benedictine Father, you will hear the name of St. Benedict; a Dominican Friar will mention "Our Holy Father

St. Dominic," and the Franciscans put in St. Francis.

They all have permission from the Pope to make this addition. The Liturgy of the Eastern Church; that is, the Liturgy of the Catholic Church in those countries which lie east of Constantinople, differs from that of the Western Church in many respects, and even in some Western countries you would find that they have customs of their own. Thus, if you were to go to France, you would see a large loaf, or a number of small ones, blessed before the Offertory of the Mass on Sunday, cut up into little bits, and distributed among the people, who often eat the morsels there and then. They are called "Pain benit," or blessed bread. This was the custom some years ago, and it still continues, I suppose. Perhaps if

you were to assist at a Mass in a Polish, Bohemian, or particularly in a Greek Catholic Church, you might be tempted to say as a little girl once did, "These people don't know how to say Mass."

But they do know; only their way — that is, their ceremonies and Liturgy — are by permission, a little, only a *very* little, different from ours. The sacrifice is always the same.

So we may sum up in this way: Her teaching with regard to faith and morals the Church can never change; matters of discipline she may. And now, children, we have come to the end of our little explanation of the doctrines and ceremonies of holy Mass, and you have still much more to learn than is set down here. It is all interesting, all most beautiful, and I often wonder why people do not study

the Liturgy and teaching of the Church more, and other things less.

If you have learned to love and understand the holy sacrifice — the great gift of the King — even a little more from reading this book, sometimes remember to say a prayer for the writer when assisting at holy Mass.

I had hoped to have put in a chapter for the servers, those happy children who are privileged to “Go into the altar of God,” but space is wanting. You shall have a story instead which will help you just as much as an extra chapter could do; that is, if you read the story with your hearts as well as with your eyes. I have not seen it in print since I was a little child like some of you.

LEGEND OF THE INFANT JESUS SERVING AT
MASS

COME, children all, whose joy it is
To serve at holy Mass,
And hear what once, in days of faith,
In England came to pass.

It chanced a priest was journeying
Through wildering ways of wood,
And there where few came passing by,
A lonely chapel stood.

He stayed his feet, that pilgrim priest,
His morning Mass to say,
And put the sacred vestments on
That near the altar lay.

But who shall serve the holy Mass,
For all is silent there?
He kneels him down and patient waits
The peasant's hour of prayer.

When lo, a Child of wondrous grace
Before the altar steals,
And down beside that lowly priest
In Infant beauty kneels.

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He serves the Mass; His voice is sweet,
Like distant music low;
With downcast look, and modest mien,
And footfall hushed and slow.

Et Verbum caro factum est,
He lingers till He hears,
Then turning to the Virgin's shrine
In glory disappears.

Then round the altar, children dear,
Press gladly, in God's name,
For once to serve at holy Mass
The sweet Child Jesus came.

—*Father Caswall's School Hymns and Songs.*

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